

"Let the States Decide"

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Congressman Mike Pence spoke on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives today, in support of sending a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution to the states:

"Our nation is facing a fiscal crisis of unprecedented proportions. We have a \$14 trillion national debt, a \$1.65 trillion annual spending deficit, and we borrow 42 cents for every dollar we spend.

"After years of borrowing and spending and bailouts by both political parties, now comes the national debate over raising the nation's debt limit.

"Now look, I believe if you owe debts, pay debts. We must honor the full faith and credit of the United States of America. But I also believe that now is the moment to take decisive action to put our fiscal house in order and restore the full confidence of the American people in the fiscal integrity of our national government.

"I believe our debt limit should not be raised without real and meaningful reforms in the way the federal government spends the people's money in the short term and the long term.

"In the short term, we need to cut spending now and implement statutory caps on how much money the federal government can spend going forward.

"But in the long term, the time has come for this Congress to send to the states a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution that will limit federal spending and require this national

government to live within our means.

"While the debate, it seems according to the newspapers today, has focused on spending cuts versus tax increases, the real answer is to cut spending now and to make any increase in the nation's debt ceiling contingent on Congress sending to the states a Balanced Budget Amendment that limits federal spending to one-fifth of the American economy.

"In short, it's time to let the states decide. Article V of the Constitution provides a process that requires any amendment to pass the House of Representatives and the Senate by a two-thirds vote. But, ultimately any amendment to the Constitution is submitted to the states. The states decide whether to amend the national charter. If three-fourths of the states agree, the Constitution is so amended.

"By demanding spending cuts today and sending a Balanced Budget Amendment to the states, we will let the states decide. And I have every confidence that these United States will choose fiscal discipline and reform.

"Thirty-two of our fifty states operate under a balanced budget requirement in their state constitution, and forty-nine have some sort of balanced budget requirement.

"In Indiana, our state has had a prohibition against assuming debt in our state Constitution since 1851. And the Hoosier state has a balanced budget and even a surplus rainy-day fund.

"I can tell you after years of fighting runaway federal spending by both political parties here in Washington D.C., we need more accountability. We need more engagement of the states and the American people.

"If you think about it, as Ronald Reagan said, it's important to remember that the states created the federal government; the federal government didn't create the states.

"By engaging in a process where we demand serious and meaningful spending cuts today, capping spending going forward, but requiring that any increase in the debt ceiling be contingent on sending to the states a Balanced Budget Amendment with real spending limits in it, we will build on the wisdom and foundation of our Founders and our system of federalism.

"Mr. President, if you need more borrowing authority, let's cut spending now, let's cap spending tomorrow, and let's let the states decide whether we should permanently require that our national government live within our means.

"By enacting a Balanced Budget Amendment that limits federal spending and requires that our national government live out our own commitment to fiscal responsibility and reform, we will do right by this day, we will do right by our children and grandchildren, and we will do something worthy to be remembered in this time."